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Parent Guide

To Provincial Achievement Testing

Grade 6

Achievement tests?
We students will help you
find out all about them!
Just follow us...

Alberta
EDUCATION

Information About the Provincial Achievement Testing Program

In May-June, your son or daughter in Grade 6 will write provincial achievement tests in mathematics, language arts, science and social studies. Students in grades 3 and 9 will also write achievement tests.

Answers to questions that parents often ask are given below.

What are the achievement tests ?

Grade 3 students write tests in mathematics and language arts. Grades 6 and 9 students write tests in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. These are provincial tests. They are based on what students are expected to know and be able to do, and how well. These are the provincial standards.

Who writes the tests?

All Alberta students in grades 3, 6, and 9 are expected to write the provincial tests for their grade levels. Students in French programs write English and French Language arts tests and the French forms of the other tests. A small number of students in special circumstances, who would be unable to respond at all to the tests or who would be harmed by the testing, may be excused by a superintendent. Special provisions are made for students with physical disabilities and learning disabilities who need assistance to write the tests.

What is the purpose of the achievement tests?

The tests are designed to indicate how well Alberta students are meeting provincial standards. They are intended to support teachers in planning instruction and to inform Albertans about student achievement in the province.

What are achievement tests used for?

Each school and jurisdiction receives a detailed report on its students' results. School staff, in consultation with their school council, look at the school report to see where their students did well and where learning could be improved. The principal, teachers, parents, and the community look at these results in relation to past results, along with school and district assessments and other information about students and programs. They use this information to improve learning opportunities for their students.

Similarly, the school board and the superintendent look at the district report to see how district-wide programs can be improved for students. Alberta Education looks at the provincial results to see if changes are needed in provincial programs or policies.

In this way, everyone works together to help all students learn to their potential.

Do the provincial achievement tests test everything?

No single test can assess everything. Such things as laboratory skills, oral language expression and many other learnings are best evaluated by the classroom teacher. The clearest picture of students' growth and development is gained when a wide variety of assessment information is considered.

How are achievement tests developed?

Alberta Education and classroom teachers, in cooperation with school districts, work together to develop the provincial achievement tests. All questions are field tested with grade 3, 6, or 9 students before being used on provincial tests. Questions have to be clear to students, or we don't include the questions.

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How long do these tests take to write?

The Grade 3 language arts test has two parts: reading and writing. Each takes one hour. The multiple-choice test for mathematics also takes about one hour.

In grades 6 and 9, the written section of the language arts test takes about two hours, and the reading section one and one-half hours. Multiple-choice tests in each of the other three subject areas also take about one and one-half hours.

Suitable breaks are provided for students. Also, tests are scheduled over several days so that only one test is written in a day.

When are the tests written?

The written part of the language arts test is scheduled for late May and the rest of the tests in the last half of June.

How are the tests marked?

Teachers are provided with scoring guides and samples of student work that illustrate the standards. This enables teachers to mark their students' tests and use the results as part of students' final grades.

Provincial marking is done centrally. Multiple-choice questions are machine-scored. Teachers meet in July to mark the written part of the language arts test. Alberta Education staff provide training to the teachers and carry out regular reliability checks during central marking.

Do the achievement tests affect report card marks?

The teacher is in charge of classroom assessment. Each individual teacher decides whether to mark the tests and use the results in arriving at final grades for the child.

The teacher may use the mark for a whole test or part of the test along with other assessment information. If teachers use the mark from an entire test, the results will reflect the provincial standard best.

How can I get the achievement test results?

We prepare a chart, or profile, showing each child's performance in relation to provincial standards on each test. We send two copies to the school that the child will be attending in September. One copy is for the student's record and the other is for sharing with parents. If we do not know which school a student will be attending, we send the profiles to the school where the child wrote the achievement test.

Detailed reports are provided for each school and jurisdiction. These reports include the provincial results.

What can I do to help my child?

Frequent reading both in and out of school is critical to children's success in all subject areas. When children read broadly and often, they develop a base that is necessary for future learning because they experience new vocabulary and sentence structures, search out answers to questions, solve problems and gain information; and they develop valuable thinking skills as they work to get meaning from their reading. All of these are essential for success in school.

It is important to remember that much learning happens quite naturally within the home environment. Families talk about things, go places and do things together, play games, make plans and deal with home situations. Listening to your child, showing enthusiasm and providing encouragement goes a long way to building self-confidence.

It is most important to be in communication with your child's teacher. By talking with the teacher, you can gain an understanding of what is expected of your child. You can also get more specific tips about ways to support your child's learning.

More questions?

If you have additional questions or comments about achievement testing, please speak with your child's teacher or school principal, or contact

The Achievement
Testing Team
Student Evaluation
Branch Alberta Education
(403)427-0010

To be connected toll-free in Alberta, dial 310-0000.

Provincial Standards and Sample Questions

The following is a short list of what students should know in mathematics by the end of Grade 6. You can get a more complete description through discussion of your child's educational program with his/her teacher.

Below are some sample questions. The questions give you a first-hand look at what provincial achievement tests are about. We have reduced the actual print size and changed the format to fit the limited space available in the Parent Guide. The tests are much friendlier for students. The answers to the questions are on page 8.

Grade 6 Mathematics Standards

Students are expected to be able to:

- select an appropriate strategy to define and solve a problem
- use decimal numbers from thousanths to billions and fractions, and show numbers in a variety of ways
- add, subtract, multiply and divide whole numbers and decimals using estimation, paper and pencil, calculators and computers when appropriate
- summarize, generalize, and extend patterns, including those found in music and art
- estimate, measure and/or calculate and compare quantities of length, area, capacity, mass, volume, angles and time
- compare and classify three-dimensional objects and two-dimensional shapes; slide, flip and turn shapes
- collect, display, and interpret data from a variety of sources and compare experimental results to what was predicted

Grade 6 Mathematics Sample Questions

Read and then answer the questions below.

Use the following information to answer question 1.

Ms Thompson's Grade 6 class at Prairieview School are looking forward to their field trip visiting mountain park vacation spots.

Route	**Distance**
Prairieview to Jasper	309 km
Jasper to Banff	287 km
Banff to Prairieview	367 km

1. The class will be travelling from Prairieview School to Jasper and then to Banff. They will go directly home from Banff. **About** how far will they travel on their trip?

A. 1000 km
B. 900 km
C. 800 km
D. 700 km

2. At a campfire talk in the evening, the park ranger showed the class a picture of two bear cubs. He said that, together, the bear cubs have a mass of 135 kg. If one cub's mass is 5 kg more than the other cub's mass, what is the mass of each cub?

A. 130 kg, 5 kg
B. 65 kg, 70 kg
C. 67 kg, 68 kg
D. 65 kg, 60 kg

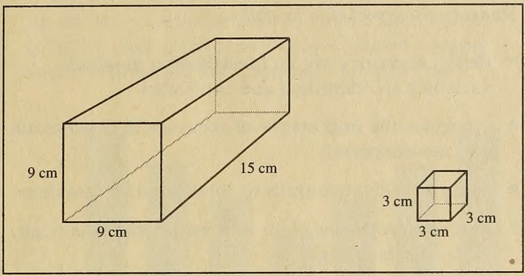
3. Some students had pizza for lunch in Banff.

Michael ate $\frac{1}{2}$ of his pizza, Cliff ate $\frac{2}{5}$ of his pizza, David ate $\frac{3}{10}$ of his, and Patricia ate $\frac{3}{5}$ of hers.

Who ate the greatest portion of pizza?

A. Michael
B. Cliff
C. David
D. Patricia

Use the following diagram to answer question 4.



4. Stacy bought a block of fudge 9 cm × 9 cm × 15 cm and cut it into cubes 3 cm × 3 cm × 3 cm. How many cubes of this size did she have?

A. 15
B. 27
C. 45
D. 81

Grade 6 Language Arts Standards

Students are expected to be able to:

- read and understand a variety of Grade 6 level texts
- identify organization, main ideas, and supporting details in non-fiction
- describe and communicate the actions and motives of characters and the events in Grade 6 level literature
- identify a writer's or speaker's purpose and discuss whether it was achieved
- use appropriate words and sentence structure and correct punctuation and spelling in their own writing
- gather and organize information from several sources to prepare reports and answer questions
- communicate information and ideas effectively for a specific audience and provide support for ideas and opinions

Grade 6 Language Arts Sample Questions

Part A: Writing

The written part of the test has two assignments designed to be completed in two hours. One consists of a picture and a prompt that students respond to in the form of a story. The second is a piece of functional writing. This is usually a business letter, either of invitation or requesting information.

Students' writing is evaluated on what they say and how well they say it. The scoring categories for the story are content, organization, sentence structure, vocabulary, and conventions (spelling, grammar, and punctuation). Content and organization are weighted to be worth twice as much as each of the other categories. The scoring categories for the letter are content and content management (conventions and format), weighted equally.

Part B: Reading

Read the journal entries below and answer questions 1 to 5.

I'VE BEEN TO THE TOP OF THE WORLD

These are personal journal entries written by Jason Wissink, aged 12, the youngest person to reach the North Pole.

DAY ONE: RESOLUTE

When all 14 members of our tour met at Resolute airport, our arctic gear was piled halfway to the ceiling. We weren't the only Pole-bound travellers leaving Resolute that day. A second group planned to fly to the north end of Ellesmere Island and then take two months to *walk* to the Pole! The intrepid group that my Dad led flew there—in three days. That's more my style!

DAY TWO: NORTH MAGNETIC POLE

We flew out of Resolute in a ski-shod Twin Otter. Destination: Eureka, with a detour to the North Magnetic Pole. It's not the same as the North Pole. It's the spot on the earth where compasses point, and it's always moving. Someone jokingly said that the North Magnetic Pole is a huge mountain of iron and that's why compasses all point there. But when we flew over it, all I could see was rough ice—too rough to land on.

The plan was to fly to Eureka on Ellesmere Island, spend the night at the weather station and get more fuel for our plane before flying on to the Pole the next day. But guess what? The walking expedition got to Eureka before us. No, they didn't walk there! While we were having fun flying circles around the North Magnetic Pole, they'd flown straight to Eureka and grabbed all the beds! Our group had to fly back to Resolute.

DAY THREE: EUREKA

Finally, after cooling our heels all day while a storm blew itself out, we flew back to the Eureka weather station. After dinner, we followed a wolf trail from the bunkhouse to the garbage dump. Soon three wolves were circling us, trying to get downwind so they could catch our scent. Dad told us they weren't sizing us up for food, they were just being wary.

It was midnight by the time we finished our walk. The sun was still up and I was too excited to sleep. North Pole Day was almost here!

DAY FOUR: THE NORTH POLE

Not one, but two Twin Otters were sitting on the runway this morning. Each plane had to carry seven people and extra drums of fuel in case of an emergency. At last, the co-pilot yelled over his shoulder, "The North Pole is directly below."

There were many water-filled leads* below us and I was afraid that the plane would break through the ice when it landed. To take my mind off this, Dad joked that each time we'd circled the Pole looking for a place to land, we'd flown around the world. If that's the case, I've been around the world seven times!

We found a place to land not far from the Pole. I was second off the plane, clutching my big Canadian flag. I planted the flag and Dad took some photographs of us all. He said our group was special because it included the youngest person (me) and the oldest person (an 89-year-old man from Japan) to ever reach the Pole.

Jason Wissink

**lead—a channel in an ice field*

1. The North Magnetic Pole is different from the North Pole because the North Magnetic Pole is

   A. very cold year-round
   B. a huge mountain of iron
   C. hard to find with a compass
   D. a constantly changing location

2. Jason and his group could not stay in Eureka on Day Two because

   A. their plane ran out of fuel
   B. all their equipment had not arrived
   C. the bad weather forced them to turn back
   D. other Pole-bound travellers got there first

3. The wolves were circling the group (line 30 - 31) because they were

   A. starving for food
   B. getting ready to attack
   C. trying to catch the people's scent
   D. looking for shelter from the storm

4. The word "wary" (line 33) means

   A. timid
   B. cautious
   C. aggressive
   D. bothersome

5. On the trip, Jason was afraid when he thought that the

   A. plane would run out of fuel
   B. plane would break through the ice
   C. group had nowhere to stay the first night
   D. other travellers would get to the Pole first

Grade 6 Science Standards

Students are expected to be able to:

- design and carry out an investigation in which variables are identified and controlled
- recognize the importance of accuracy in observation and measurement
- apply investigative skills to solve practical problems
- describe properties of air and the interactions of air with objects in flight
- construct devices that move through air, and identify adaptations for controlling flight
- observe, describe, and interpret the movement of objects in the sky
- apply observation and inference skills to recognize, interpret, and distinguish patterns
- apply a knowledge of the properties and interactions of materials
- describe characteristics of trees and interaction of trees with other living things

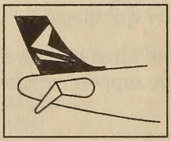
Grade 6 Science Sample Questions

Use the following information to answer question 1.

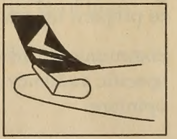
Before Natalie and Peter flew in an airplane
to visit their Uncle jake at his cabin,
they went on a tour of the airport.

1. Which picture would Natalie use to show Peter the position that an airplane's elevator would have to be to enable the airplane to climb?

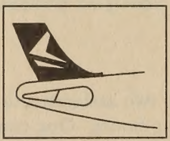
A.



B.



C.



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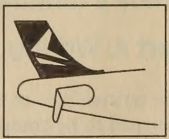
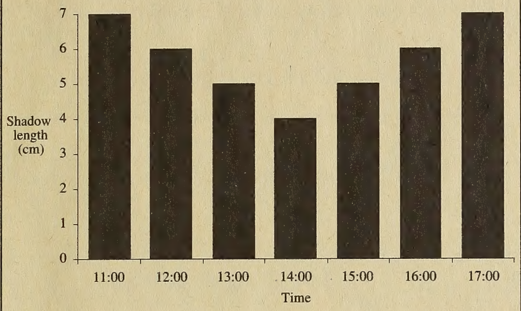


Use the following information to answer question 2.

An airplane mechanic showed them a sundial that could be used to tell time. Natalie noticed a graph on the wall beside the mechanic's workbench.

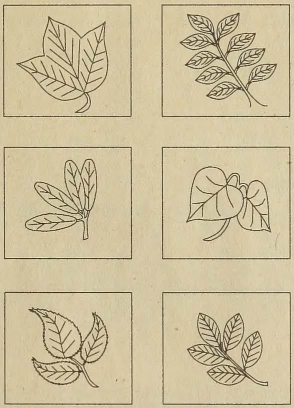


2. The graph shows that on the day the mechanic recorded the results, the sun would have been farthest above the horizon at

   A. 12:00
   B. 13:00
   C. 14:00
   D. 15:00

Use the following information to answer question 3.

After they arrived at Uncle Jake's cabin, Natalie and Peter collected these leaves.



3. Natalie noted that all of the leaves

   A. are simple leaves
   B. are compound leaves
   C. come from coniferous trees
   D. come from deciduous trees

Grade 6 Social Studies Standards

Students are expected to be able to:

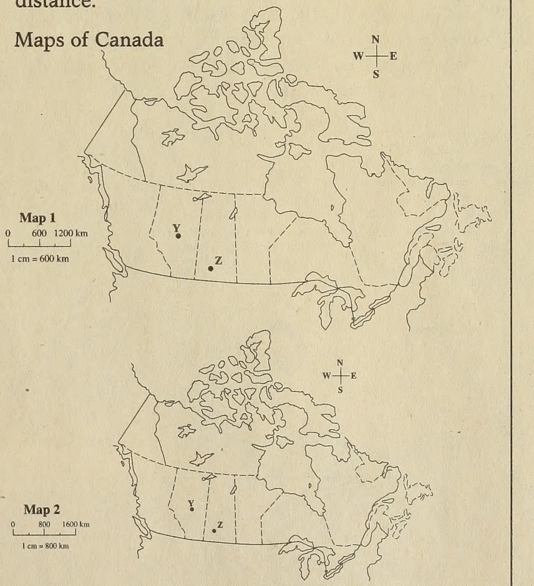
- describe how meeting human needs has varied over time and from place to place in three societies, Ancient Greece, Canada, and China
- locate, organize, interpret, and analyze information related to meeting human needs
- use, interpret, and compare maps of different scales and themes to locate places and identify physical and political features
- explain how countries are interdependent and how lifestyles are influenced by other nations
- identify the responsibilities and rights of individual citizens in Canada and the role of government
- show respect for others by using parliamentary procedures and accepting and abiding by the decision of the group

Grade 6 Social Studies Sample Questions

Use the following information to answer question 1.

While travelling with her parents in Western Canada, Sheila was asked by her mother to calculate the distance between two cities. Sheila's atlas had two maps of Canada. Although each map was a different size, she was still able to determine the distance.

Maps of Canada



1. Sheila determined that the distance between the two cities, Y and Z, is approximately

   A. 600 km **B.** 800 km
   C. 1200 km **D.** 4000 km

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Use the following information to answer question 2.

A Grade 6 class watched the video "Heilongjiang: Alberta's Twin Province." Their teacher had instructed them to pay particular attention to the ways that goods and services are exchanged to help satisfy needs. After seeing the video, the class discussed it and made the following chart:

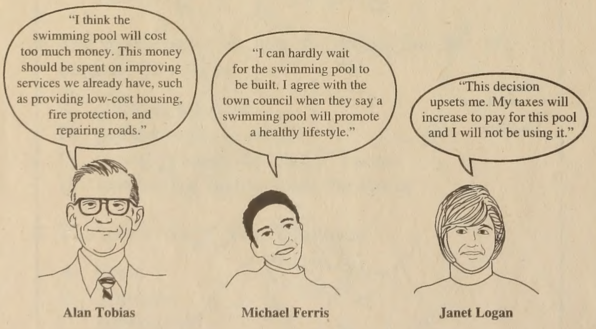
Canada to China	**China to Canada**
• oil and gas	• gunpowder
• movies	• magnetic compasses
• technology	• postal system
• pipelines	• tea
• fish-farming methods	• rice

2. Which statement **best** describes the **whole** chart?

   A. Canada receives rice from China, and China receives oil and gas from Canada.
   B. What Canada provides to China is more useful than what China provides to Canada.
   C. Through exchanges, over the years, Canada and China have satisfied some of their needs.
   D. Canadians want more Chinese tourists, and the Chinese want more Canadians to eat Chinese foods.

Read the following information and then answer question 3.

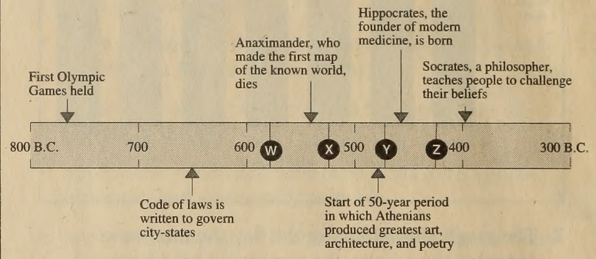
When the people of Hillsburg discussed the need for a swimming pool, some supported the idea while others were against it. The town council voted in favour of building the swimming pool.


"I think the swimming pool will cost too much money. This money should be spent on improving services we already have, such as providing low-cost housing, fire protection, and repairing roads."
"I can hardly wait for the swimming pool to be built. I agree with the town council when they say a swimming pool will promote a healthy lifestyle."
"This decision upsets me. My taxes will increase to pay for this pool and I will not be using it."
Alan Tobias
Michael Ferris
Janet Logan

3. Which question are these people discussing?

   A. Should children have the same rights as adults?
   B. How can citizens be actively involved in local government?
   C. Should lobby groups be allowed to influence government decisions?
   D. What community services should be provided?

Use the following time-line to answer question 4.


First Olympic Games held
Anaximander, who made the first map of the known world, dies
Hippocrates, the founder of modern medicine, is born
Socrates, a philosopher, teaches people to challenge their beliefs
800 B.C.
700
600
W
X
500
Y
Z
400
300 B.C.
Code of laws is written to govern city-states
Start of 50-year period in which Athenians produced greatest art, architecture, and poetry

4. What is the **best** title for this time-line?

   A. Governments of Ancient Greece
   B. Contributions of Ancient Greece
   C. Important People of Ancient Greece
   D. Occupations of Ancient Greece

Mathematics Answers
1. A
2. B
3. D
4. C

Science Answers
1. B
2. C
3. D

Language Arts Answers
1. D
2. D
3. C
4. B
5. B

Social Studies Answers
1. B
2. C
3. D
4. B

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Student Evaluation